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THE WASHINGTON, D.C., SPELLING LIST

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In the Sixth Division of the Washington public schools, a plan for improving spelling was started about six years ago. It has been carefully developed and is now used in the entire city. At the circle meetings of each grade, the teachers were asked to bring lists of words which children habitually misspelled in their written work. Teachers conferred concerning the words and, after duplicates were struck out, lists were compiled. These were typewritten and were sent to each grade. Each teacher in the Sixth Division drilled on the list for her grade.

As the results were profitable, the next year the director of intermediate instruction asked teachers from the third grade to the eighth, inclusive, in the entire city to submit lists of the fifteen words which were most frequently misspelled by pupils of the grade. By careful work on the part of individual teachers and by conference in circle meetings, a list was made which is the result of the combined experience of practically all the teachers in the grades concerned. It consists of five hundred words in all, arranged in grade lists. The list for each grade is short, the longest comprising about one hundred words. The words, therefore, can be taught as well as assigned. More variety in presentation has been found possible, and greater accuracy in results has been obtained.

The list conforms to the standard of daily use. The words are those which are fundamentally common in American written usage—words which children and adults continually have need to use. The actual experience of pupils in the use of written English in our schools has been the basis for the grading of the lists. The lists specially aim to supply the needs of spontaneous written composition. Children are often asked to write a rough draft of some actual occurrence, in the writing of which the thought of the child is on content, not on spelling. This is a real test of the child's ability to spell.

LATEST REVISED LIST

THIRD GRADE

| | | |
|-------------|----------|---------------|
| about | girl | than |
| across | | they |
| animal | here | Tuesday |
| attic | hear | through |
| almost | have to | twelve |
| aunt | hundred | there |
| America | horse | their |
| again | house | together |
| always | | thing |
| | island | think |
| before | insect | thought |
| because | Indian | two |
| bird | | treasure |
| bought | know | touched |
| build | | |
| beneath | laughed | until |
| baby | little | upon |
| beautiful | | used to |
| | machine | United States |
| caught | many | |
| colors | | very |
| children | name | |
| camel | nickel | warm |
| curtain | | wear |
| clothes | once | were |
| climb | other | where |
| city | our | which |
| country | often | whose |
| | | went |
| does | people | with |
| Dutch | picture | Wednesday |
| | pretty | when |
| ever | pencil | want |
| every | piece | who |
| eleven | pleasant | |
| earth | | |
| enough | rough | |
| evening | | |
| | said | |
| field | school | |
| first | shoes | |
| forty-eight | Saturday | |
| from | squirrel | |
| forehead | stopped | |
| father | | |
| February | | |
| farmer | | |

FOURTH GRADE

| | | |
|------------|------------|----------|
| all right | fourteen | receive |
| altogether | friend | remain |
| answer | find | really |
| Arctic | fourth | |
| Antarctic | forty-four | separate |
| | family | several |
| believe | | straight |
| buy | grammar | scissors |
| bough | goes | sentence |
| | geography | subtract |
| cough | great | sugar |
| colored | | |
| Chesapeake | hole | though |
| collar | hoist | tongue |
| coming | | too many |
| capital | knee | truly |
| capitol | | taught |
| carrying | listen | twelfth |
| chimney | | those |
| circle | minute | towel |
| | meant | Thursday |
| different | mountain | trouble |
| daily | | too much |
| divide | ninety | |
| division | neighbors | useful |
| | necessary | uncle |
| expect | | |
| ease | period | weather |
| easy | poetry | whether |
| easily | Potomac | whole |
| empties | present | writing |
| errand | | weak |
| except | quotient | |
| | quite | |
| | quiet | |

FIFTH GRADE

| | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| any | gypsy | scholar |
| ache | guard | surely |
| anxiety | growth | secret |
| against | | studying |
| among | handkerchief | surprise |
| afraid | | sincerely |
| although | its | soldier |
| Atlantic | imperative | strength |
| | interrogative | |
| beginning | | temperature |
| business | library | |
| busy | length | usually |
| busily | | |
| | muscle | village |
| certainly | mucilage | |
| carriage | | whisper |
| complain | niece | written |
| continent | nephew | western |
| coast | | wrist |
| | | wholly |
| | obliging | |
| divisible | onion | |
| dining | ocean | |
| describe | ought | |
| destroy | | |
| direction | potato | |
| | potatoes | |
| escape | pronoun | |
| equator | predicate | |
| equally | Pacific | |
| | promise | |
| false | | |
| fierce | running | |
| farm | | |
| fifty | | |
| familiar | | |
| farther | | |
| four-fifths | | |

SIXTH GRADE

| | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| auxiliary | height | quantity |
| absence | | |
| accept | independent | represent |
| article | icicle | respectfully |
| adjective | immediately | repair |
| | | reservoir |
| being | jewelry | recipe |
| boundary | | receipt |
| bureau | luncheon | |
| | | sailor |
| cordially | mischief | seize |
| consonant | misspell | siege |
| calendar | measles | |
| cereals | manufacture | syllable |
| choir | medicine | sauce |
| cemetery | | Spanish |
| captain | ninetieth | scenery |
| cousin | neither | |
| | | thorough |
| decimal | oblige | |
| during | occurred | unusual |
| declaration | | |
| disease | pupil | vegetable |
| description | perhaps | |
| disappoint | parallel | |
| dictionary | possession | |
| | prairie | |
| excellent | preposition | |
| endeavor | possess | |
| | phrase | |
| finally | possible | |
| foreign | permanent | |
| | pleasure | |
| government | pursue | |
| Great Britain | | |
| guide | | |

SEVENTH GRADE

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| attorney | frequently | quince |
| apparel | forfeit | |
| attacked | faucet | representative |
| attendance | | recommend |
| accommodation | group | religion |
| analysis | | relative |
| aisle | hoping | related |
| apostrophe | hygiene | recognize |
| already | | |
| acknowledge | interest | stirred |
| apartment | | secrecy |
| | judgment | scene |
| baluster | judicial | sovereign |
| benefited | | souvenir |
| Briton | knowledge | secretary |
| biscuit | kerosene | superintendent |
| | | similar |
| coughing | language | spoonfuls |
| conscience | lettuce | spinach |
| citizen | | spigot |
| colonel | manual training | salary |
| cleanse | monarchies | |
| croquet | managing | trait |
| campaign | martyr | transferred |
| compromise | modifying | threw |
| cabinet | Mediterranean | |
| ceiling | | using |
| continually | physician | |
| commission | probably | vertical |
| college | persuade | vinegar |
| | parliament | |
| diphthong | precede | wrongly |
| definition | preparation | |
| development | promissory | zinc |
| decide | privilege | |
| disappear | punctual | |
| dissolve | perform | |
| | prune | |
| exercise | perceive | |
| executive | patient | |

EIGHTH GRADE

| | | |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| amateur | hyphen | ridiculous |
| angel | | resistance |
| angle | indictment | respectably |
| algebra | | |
| apologize | license | secede |
| aqueduct | leisure | supersede |
| | liquid | symptom |
| bouquet | | society |
| bilious | moral | sufficient |
| | mortgage | synonym |
| committee | mischievous | stationary |
| conscientious | menu | |
| comparative | | tariff |
| criticise | neuter | |
| candidate | nominative | utensil |
| conduit | nasturtium | |
| chrysanthemum | ninety-ninth | virtue |
| chauffeur | | vengeance |
| | occasionally | vaccinate |
| definite | occurrence | vicinity |
| descriptive | origin | |
| discipline | | |
| descendant | primitive | |
| diphtheria | participle | |
| debris | principal | |
| debut | principle | |
| | portiere | |
| eligible | pursuit | |
| embarrass | prejudice | |
| exhaust | planning | |
| existence | precinct | |
| eighty-eighth | perspiration | |
| exaggerate | | |
| forfeiture | | |
| foreigner | | |
| fatigue | | |
| grammatical | | |
| grateful | | |

The purpose of the list is to give to all pupils of the elementary grades the ability to spell the words that later school and social demands require them to be able to write.

In September, each teacher from the third grade to the eighth begins with the third-grade list and works on that list until the

school is practically perfect in it. By the close of the year each teacher is responsible for the words in her own grade and those in the grades preceding. At various intervals during the year tests from the lists are sent to each grade. These test papers are corrected and the results sent to the supervisor. Among the data given to the supervisor is a list of the seven words most frequently misspelled. These most frequently misspelled words are arranged in lists according to the grade, are typewritten, and are sent to each building for special emphasis.

This list does not represent the only spelling that Washington pupils have. The pupils have short daily lessons from a regular speller, but the list is the more vital and efficient of the two because it is an adjustment to a particular school system where there is a uniform course of study.

These lists have brought about a marked improvement in the spelling of the written work of the children of the Washington schools. Many of the deeply rooted mistakes have disappeared, such as the misspelling of "already," "separate," "truly," "all right," "have to," and so on. A proof of the improvement of the spelling is the unusually high averages recently attained by the schools in tests from the Ayres spelling list given by the superintendent of schools. In almost every case, classes made from 5 to 10 per cent higher than the standard percentage given.

Following the success with the words of daily use came the question of the spelling of difficult geographical names. It has been suggested in the Sixth Division that the children should not be burdened too early with the responsibility of this task. Instead, lists of these names are written on the blackboard or printed on cardboard, and the pupils are free to look at them in all geographical work, oral or written. Visual familiarity will surely bring about as successful results as we get in attempting to hold children responsible for the spelling of names which only exceptionally good spellers can master.